



QUARANTINE PROM
QUEEN DREAM ZINE

MOUTHS TO FEED CREATIVE COLLECTIVE

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In this issue

Quarantine

LOCKDOWN FOOD LOG 8

One day of perfect quarantine eating. Featuring far too many eggs.

QUARANTINE QRAFTING 10

Kombucha, knitting, and knot-tying, oh my! 13 ways to keep your hands busy.

"WE LIVED HAPPILY DURING THE PANDEMIC," A SHORT STORY 12
Sandra doesn't get what everyone's so upset about.

Prom Queen

COVER GIRL VIOLET MCLAREN ON BEING PROM QUEEN IN QUARANTINE 17

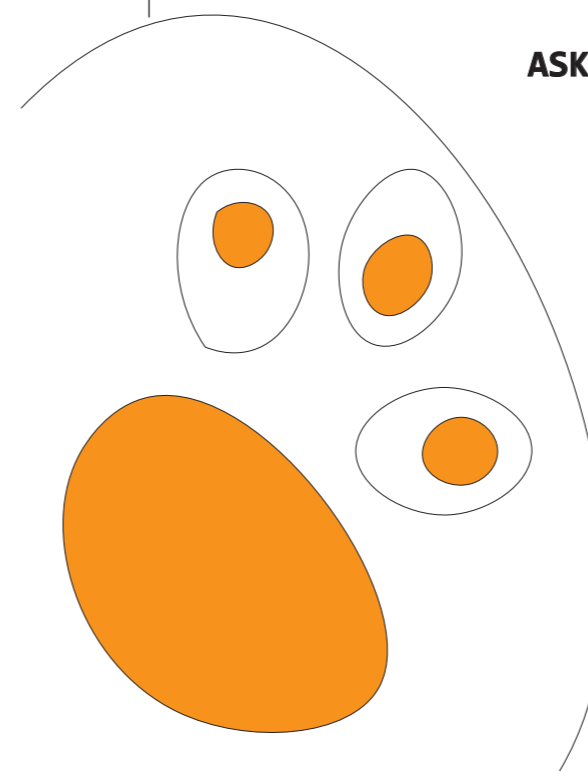
THE ULTIMATE PROM PLAYLIST 20
Bangers only, from ABBA to Z.

CHOOSE YOUR FIGHTER! 21
Prom date edition.

Dream Zine

MAPPING THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL WORLD OF QUARANTINE DREAMS 24
An illustrated guide to y'all's twisted minds.

ASK AN ADULT: ON ACHIEVING YOUR DREAMS 26
Natalie Dewhirst offers words of wisdom.



Love, Mouths.



Letter from the editor.

When did it start for you?

For me, it was March 11. I had fled Pau, where it was still winter, for Lisbon, where it was 70 degrees and sunny. At my hostel, I met a girl from Milan, and we drank sangria together elbow to elbow. "There's so many Italians here!" she remarked, as a group of four more walked in (just missing the national lockdown, as it turns out).

On the train back, I coughed into my shoulder and dabbed at my runny nose. Surrounded by people coming home from break, I was acutely conscious of the possibility that I was carrying the virus. I went home and have hardly left since.

In that time, I have experienced loss and growth, creativity and hopelessness. You will find all of these conflicting emotions here.

For our cover girl, there will be no senior prom, but there is a prom playlist. We're stuck inside, but hey, there's eggs in here. And as the Mouths' mom reminds us, plans fall apart, but we can keep dreaming anyway.

Love and blessings,

Ciara

Photo by @davispuh on Flickr

QUARANTINE

Quarantine Menu #1: Ciara

10 am - TOO MANY EGGS

on baguette tradition with butter and fried shallots
accompanied by a homemade latte

By the time the food is on the table it's somehow 10 already. To make up for it, breakfast is elaborate: four soft-boiled eggs smashed over generously buttered baguette. The boulangerie around the corner, is, of course, considered an essential business and still open during the quarantine. To drink, Bialetti-brewed coffee with foamed milk. Shallots avec make it healthy, right?

3 pm - "The Cookies"

aka Alison Roman's chocolate chip shortbread

Oops, I blinked and it's 3 pm. As my old landlady told me the other day, in quarantine, time passes surprisingly quickly. And as she also told me, with all the cooking everyone's doing, "on risque devenir énorme."

I finally got around to making "The Cookies," Alison Roman's famous chocolate chip shortbread. I'm going to be honest. The whole "cookie" thing didn't work out — the shortbread fell apart every time I tried slicing the log. On the bright side, that sandy mess made a delicious traybake. I ate it over FaceTime Catan. Fun was had by all.

6 pm - Rosé lemonade, plain potato chips, and crudités

One of the most surreal things about the quarantine is that, like in Camus' *La Peste*, it began when the weather was fine. The sun is shining, we've turned the heaters off, and it feels like the perfect time to be sipping cold drinks outside.

We may not be allowed outside, but we are still allowed to drink. Rosé with fresh lemon juice and sugar, garnished with a sprig of mint. Hell yeah. Plus snacks, because what's an apero without them?

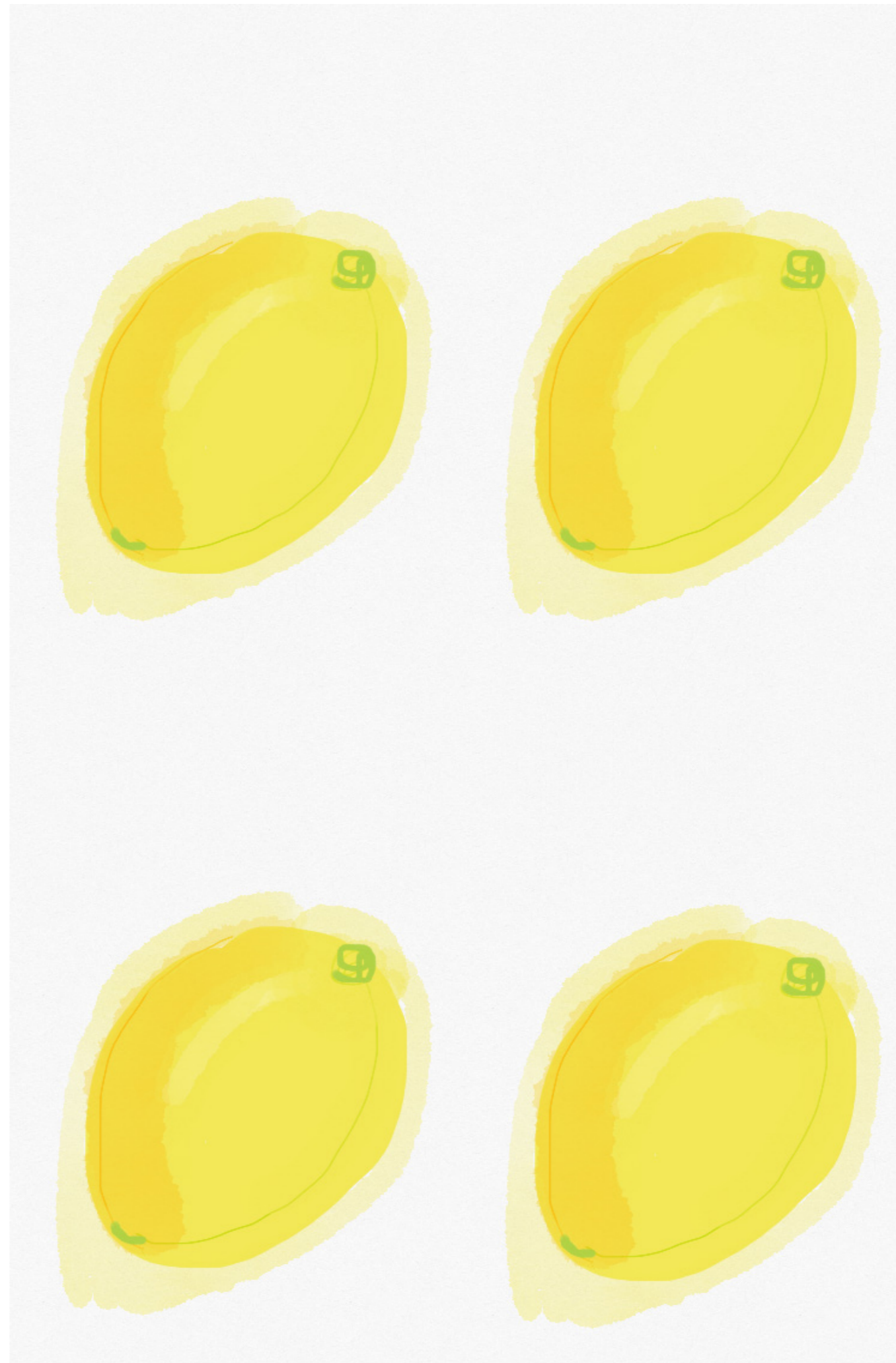
10:15 pm - Maiale al latte

(milk-braised pork)

with sauteed spinach and polenta

I do not normally eat dinner at 10:15. I made a terrible, terrible mistake. To make a long, sad story short, I was overly optimistic about how long it would take to cook a large slab of pork to fork tenderness.

When dinner was ready, it was, dare I say, worth it? Lemon peel, hot peppers, and milk curdle together in the oven to form orange, savory nuggets. One of the most funny-looking and delicious meals I have ever eaten.



13 Quarantine Qrafts

Fun fact: a craft is whatever you want it to be.

1. SCOBY diving

Fermentation: everybody's doing it! Kombucha is a fun, mildly-alcoholic fermented drink, but to make it, first you need a SCOBY. Grow one at home from storebought kombucha. It's free real estate.

2. Collage

Do you remember being forced to make collages in middle school art class? It's a lot more fun when it's not for a grade. Cut up your junk mail and go to town.

3. Turn plastic bags into yarn

Yes, this is possible. Once you've knotted the plastic bags into yarn, you can crochet more plastic bags, which, confusingly, cannot then be turned into yarn.



4. Bury a time capsule

Fill a box with memorabilia from this year and hide it somewhere safe. Be sure to prominently feature "2020: Year of Coronavirus" on the inside lid so people from the future freak out when they open it.

5. Make pulp out of cardboard

By shredding old cardboard packaging, you can actually make paper from scratch. Possibly a good option if you run out of space in your journal and all the stores are closed?

6. Fold money into origami

Money, money, money. Enough worrying. Start folding. If you fold your entire stimulus check into paper cranes, you will be granted good luck for the rest of your life.

7. Learn knot-tying

Knot-tying, along with tire-changing and lock-picking, is one of those deeply impressive skills that doesn't take that much effort to learn.

8. Make an RPG

Using websites like RPG playground, you can easily make flash-based games in your browser. Bonus points for building your game from scratch. However that works.

9. Sew PPE

With thick cotton fabric, elastic, and a few basic stitches, you can make your own face mask. Make extra and hang them on a public "mask tree" to share with neighbors.

10. Publish an e-zine

Podcasts are so early 2010s. Microphones are sold out on Amazon anyway. Get creative another way by publishing a zine online.



Look
at this
absolute
unit.

Photo by
[@dvanzuijlekom](#) on Flickr

11. Troll an online forum

Go on r/army and say you're from North Korea. Log in to Mumsnet and post about hating children. The possibilities are endless.

12. Cook weird food

Sure, you could bake chocolate chip cookies or banana bread. But consider this: cumin-spiced cheerio traybake. Pepper meringues. Gin and tonic pie. All we're saying is live a little.

13. Wear a toga

Fold that sheet into an elaborate garment fit for Roman nobility. Put on a flower crown. You are the quarantine queen.

We Lived Happily During the Pandemic

A piece of short fiction.

For Sandra, life hadn't really changed much since the outbreak.

When the virus began to spread, she was among the first to be quarantined because of her Chinese parents. A police officer refused to look her in the eyes or come closer than 6 feet when he came to give her the news. Her father, who owned a dry goods store, sent her boxes of masks and gloves.

"Baba. I can't leave the house anyway. What am I going to do with this?"

"Be safe, Sandra. Be safe."

Her friends sent apologetic messages. It's so unfair, they said. You must be going crazy, cooped up in there, they said.

She couldn't quite tell if they were being sincere. Since when was staying home something to avoid? She thought of Bethy, who hadn't shown up to brunch three weeks in a row, liking interior design posts on Instagram instead, and Anna, who had seen every Netflix Original there was, from *Beasts of No Nation* to *Tall Girl*.

Well Sandra didn't feel the need to pretend. She liked being at home, listening to the air conditioner hum, feeling the sheets rustle against her bare legs. She liked going on her laptop. She liked working from her bedroom, plugging into her headset and reading from the customer service script.

As a bilingual support specialist, she'd heard the panic of the outbreak ebb and flow. She worked for the Company that Sold Everything, and in the early months, when the virus was

still the Chinese Virus, they were inundated with calls from Beijing, Guangzhou, Wuhan. Angry voices barked in Mandarin, insistent on securing their supply of toilet paper, packaged noodles, underwear, rolling papers. And face masks. Thanks dad, she thought, after one particularly heated call with a woman whose order of 500 face masks had never arrived, seized by the government in transit.

Weeks passed. Officials welded the doors of Wuhan shut. The calls from China slowed, and the calls from everywhere else started.

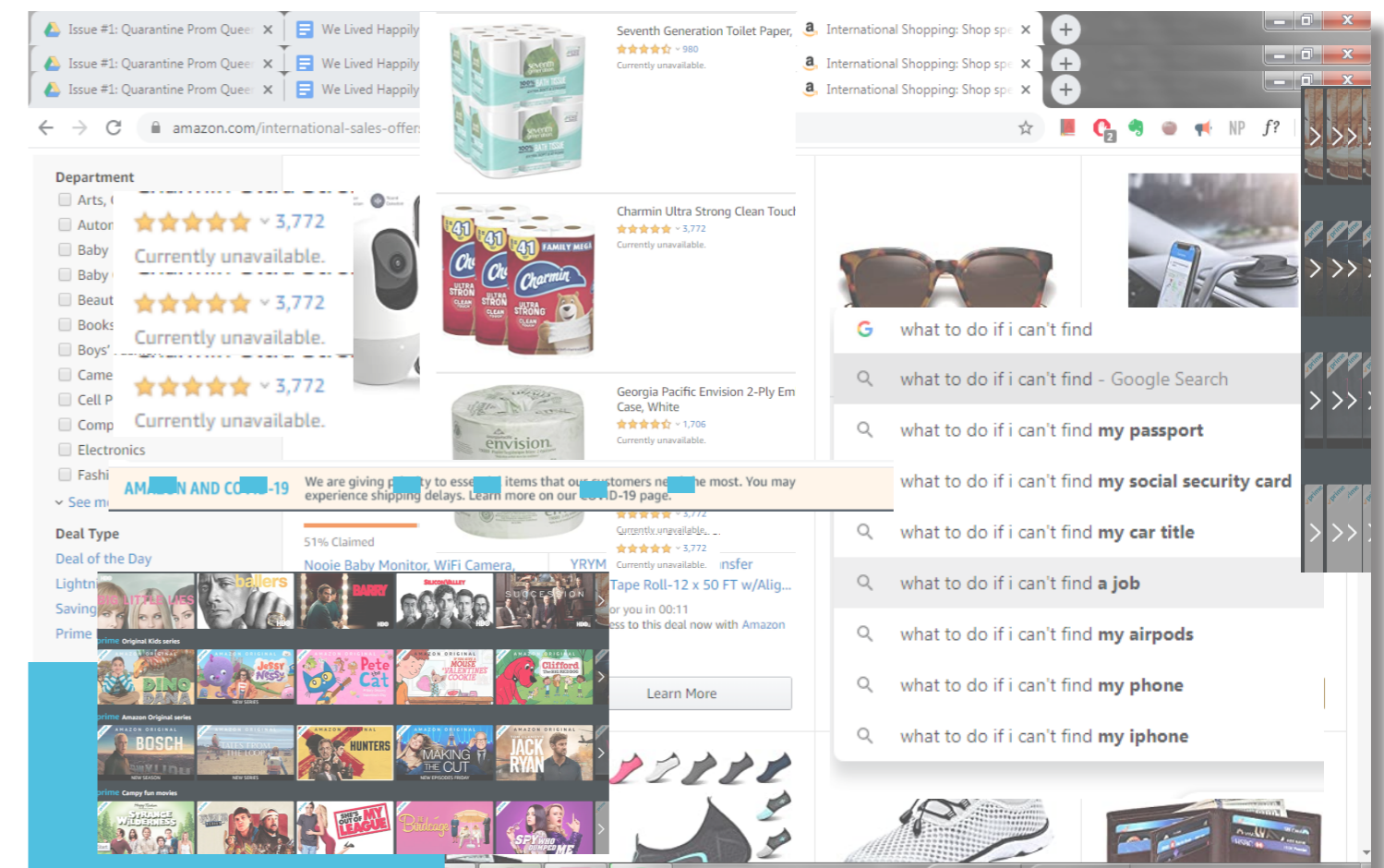
Normally, Sandra took almost exclusively calls in Mandarin, but as the outbreak spread and the phone lines flashed, she found herself switching from Mandarin to English and back again.

"Hello, this is Sandra with the Company that Sells Everything, what's your name?"

"Sandra. I've been waiting for 2 hours so please just cut the script and tell me where my order is. Order 188290." Sandra paused. The customer sighed. "I'm Barbara."

The script did an admirable job getting the information needed to locate Barbara's order of 20 jars of peanut butter. The delivery man had left it by the complex driveway, trying to make his quota 12 minutes before quitting time.

One day there was some kind of glitch and she received international callers at random.



"Maharagwe yangu ni wapi?"

"Pedí esta camiseta hace dos semanas."

"Qu'est-il arrivé à mon streaming service?"

Sandra could hear the panic in their voices, but not understanding what they said made her feel strangely calm as she told them, in English, that they would be transferred to a support specialist who spoke their language as soon as possible.

Things calmed down. The outbreak continued, but the healthy stayed home, under penalty first of heavy fines, then imprisonment in filthy, overcrowded state containment centers. They soon adopted the same rhythm of life as Sandra: AC hum, laptop clack, food delivery, work from home.

Of course people rebelled. Lovers snuck out to embrace in unwatched forests, scavengers risked arrest in abandoned warehouses to pick through VR headsets, stacks of graphics cards. In the news, Sandra read a headline: "Man hides in supermarket overnight, drinks champagne, whiskey."

But most didn't. Staying home was comfortable. Safe. Heroic, even, according to the message played on loudspeakers by passing police vehicles. Life went back to normal. Maybe they didn't realize how normal it was, until they were forced into it.

The bell rang. Sandra logged off, opened the door, and retrieved her grocery box. Miso-glazed salmon with fresh asparagus. It had just turned spring, after all. She stood by the window and watched the Company delivery man rush to his van in the golden light of early sunset. Yes, she thought. Not much has changed.

PROM QUEEN





A Prom Queen With No Court

Violet would have been attending her senior prom in April if it hadn't been for the pandemic. She spoke with Ciara about what it's like to graduate without a party.

What was the prom's theme going to be?

Ooh. I actually don't remember. Either royalty or red carpet. I think it was red carpet?

Were you going with a date?

I was going with my friend Justin -- not as a date-date -- more a friend date.

I don't think dates matter unless you're actually dating. Just match them and take good pictures.

Were you going to match?

I don't know because I didn't pick a prom dress.

Did you get a refund?

I did on two of the dresses, but there's another two or three I waited too long to return.

I know girls who spent like \$300 so I feel way worse for them.

But a lot of people didn't buy any. When they kicked us out of school... For some reason prom didn't feel super real. People weren't excited for whatever reason.

But prom hasn't even been canceled yet! Graduation is rescheduled for June at this point.

I'm not keeping my hopes up. I'm not sure I'd even want to go, for the sake of my safety and my family's safety.

Are you sad to be graduating without any of the rituals?

Yeah, I'm a little bummed out, but it's not the end of the world. Honestly, I don't really want to be in school right now.

Have you been keeping in touch with your support system?

I've been talking to Rachel, my best friend, and texting some people. But like, in the summer, I ghost everyone. And it's kind of like the summer.

Editor's note: Violet bought several dresses online, including the one pictured, intending to return all but one before the prom.



The Ultimate Prom Playlist. Period.

What makes a good prom playlist? A little irony, a little angst, a lot of danceability.

Grand Entrance: "Dancing Queen" by ABBA

Played out? Maybe. An unimpeachable banger that will make every 17-year-old in the room feel special? Absolutely.

The Song with Instructions: "Crank That" by Soulja Boy

There's something for everyone. The cool kids can unpeel themselves from the wall for some irony dancing. Actual talented people can dunk on them. Everyone can hurl themselves to the side on the "youuu."

The 'Oh My God That's My Song' Song: "Juice" by Lizzo

Any respectable prom playlist needs to bring out the occasional big guns to send people running from the snack table to the dance floor. Lizzo's sparkly self-esteem anthem is our pick.

Credits, Fade Out: "This Will Be Our Year" by Dear Nora

The graduation tearjoker genre has a lot of strong entries, from "In My Life" by the Beatles to "Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)" by Green Day. Dear Nora's cover of "This Will Be Our Year" by the Zombies is our choice because of its touching mix of youthful vocals, melancholy melody, and hopeful lyrics.

SCAN TO LISTEN TO THE FULL PLAYLIST ON SPOTIFY.



Zach

Stats

6'1", 180 lbs

Strengths

Cat-like reflexes
Excellent masseur

Weaknesses

Swollen lymph nodes
Bad at Scrabble

Special ability

In a band

Liam

Stats

5'10 1/2", 70 kg

Strengths

Full of love
Extreme quad strength

Weaknesses

Bad conversationalist
No visa to get into the country

Special ability

Elite map-reading



Rachel

Stats

5'6", 138 lbs

Strengths

Good customer service
Witty repartée

Weaknesses

Loves too deeply
Bad grammar

Special ability

Accents

Choose your fighter!

PROM QUEEN

DREAM ZINE



Quarantine Dreams



"I was, for a moment, a bird. Chasing an insect in a birdcage? Then I was me, holding the cage, but the bird was still there. I dropped the cage and held the bird as I fell through the sky. At first I thought, this is really cool, I'm flying. But then I realized I was falling."

- Hannah, creative director



"I was peeing in a bathroom stall with a half-door. A little girl was trying to get in, and I was just trying to change without the whole bathroom seeing my boobs."

- Violet, editor-in-chief

"One cat riding another like a skateboard."

- Ciara, editorial director

The Mom of the Mouths On Achieving Your Dreams

Design intern Natalie Dewhirst speaks with the Mouths (who happen to be her daughters) about living the dream vs. going with the flow.

Natalie, you're a very accomplished woman. You have a home and a family, a dog. You achieved your dream job as a design intern at Mouths. How did you get here?

You know, I credit it all to my amazing daughters. I think the fact that you chose me for this position says a lot about our relationship. And that's the thing I'm most proud of.

What were your earliest dreams, ma?

I always thought I would be a teacher. I had a fourth grade teacher who would — back when we had chalkboards — roll her chalk between her hands when she was talking to us, but she had rings so it made this really cool sound. And I think that's why I wanted to be a teacher.

I also wanted to be a farm store worker because I thought it was very magical when they went back into that refrigerator and got ice cream.

Grandma was like, you don't want to be a farm store worker. I was like, yes I do.

Do you know what farm stores are?

No.

It's like a drive-up convenience store. They'd open a sliding glass door and say "what d'you need?" And you'd say, "bread and milk and ice cream." And they'd go and bring it to us. You didn't have to get out of your car.

So you're not a teacher today. Do you wish you'd taken the teaching path?

Sometimes, but I think it's one of those jobs that seems great, but is actually pretty terrible. I think most people who do it kind of hate it. Which should tell you something. Plus, it's low paid and I like to make more money. I'm all about that money. Chasin' the bag.

At what point did your dream shift?

I was going to college to be a teacher, and I was volunteering with your first grade teacher, Mrs.—

Rogers?
Rogers.

I didn't know that.

Yeah. And she sat down with me and said, "Okay, what do I need to say to you to convince you to not do this?" And I gotta say, it was like, whoa, maybe I don't want to do this.

She was my favorite teacher!

She was a great teacher and I think she actually really loved it, but she hated the bureaucracy and the red tape.

What about the farm store?

Hm, when did I give up on that? Probably grandma shamed me. When I was four!

Are you happy with how your career has changed?

I'm more content with where I am now.

I was never someone who was like, oh, I'm gonna get into marketing. But I've always been a 'start a business' kind of kid. Like I was the kid who was selling friendship bracelets, and then I was selling pants, and then dolls.

That's what led me into web design and graphic design, because I had to have a website and I needed a catalog, which I just came across recently. You guys should look at it. It's absurd, so bad.

But that's when I learned CorelDRAW which is kind of like InDesign. Or was it QuarkX-Press? It was whatever software your uncle would pirate for me because it used to be that software came on a disk, and you could copy the disk. Too easy.

So I got into marketing just because that was the skill I gained through the business but I didn't really like it. I did that for a long time. Until this whole UX thing came up, which I actually really like. So, yeah, I guess I'm happy.

Can you talk about what you're doing with UX?

UX stands for user experience. And user experience encompasses a lot, but the focus of my job is mostly research.

Like I'm really involved in our mobile app redesign. I'm helping figure things out like 'do people want to see their deductible first, or they want to see their benefits first?'

Sometimes, it's big projects like that. Sometimes it's little questions people want answered like, yesterday, I was working on whether people like vanity phone numbers, like 1-800-MATTRESS, or do they want to just see the numbers? So we did a little quick study on that.

I get to pretend I'm a scientist in this job. So I get to have a hypothesis. And my hypothesis is that people will prefer the digits.

Your dream is not exactly what you thought it would be when you were young. Would you still say you've achieved your dreams?

The mistake I made as a kid was that I didn't really have dreams.

In a way, it's good, because there's nothing I haven't achieved. I didn't really think, 'oh, by the time I'm 30 I'm gonna have all of this stuff.'

I've just been more of a 'fly by the seat of my pants' kind of person my whole life. Just like 'take it as it comes.' I don't really have a plan. That's changing as I get older, but that's definitely how I was when I was younger.

I mean, clearly I didn't have a plan. I had 3 kids by 25. I didn't think of the future.

By the time I had my first then it became like, okay, I'm doing this. I'm having kids and being a mom.

And having Ciara was the best decision I ever made. But it wasn't a decision necessarily. It was just what happened and then I went along for the ride, which is what I did a lot. But it's panned out. I'm pretty lucky.

I think it's all about just making the next best decision. You can have a big plan but plans fail.

You said you have been planning more for the future. So what what are your dreams for the future? What do you want for yourself?

I want to have a farm—

In Vermont?

Maybe, but it's so cold there. You get snowed out. But I don't know if I care because I might become a hermit as I get older.

I just want a quiet life. I want to go out in the morning and do a watercolor and tend my own little garden. I want to have some chickens.

I might want to be a college professor. But online so I don't have to be anywhere 'cause I don't like to be anywhere if I don't have to be.

So yeah, that's my big dream for the future.

So does that mean PhD or...?

I could teach the classes I'm taking right now with a master's. But I'm very interested in getting a PhD in behavioral psychology.

I don't know. I just want to be Dr. Natalie.

What have you learned from your dreams, whether or not you accomplished them throughout your life?

What I've learned is that when I want to do something, it happens. It just does. And I think I don't think that's unique to me. I think that's anybody.

I also don't think it's magical thinking type of stuff, like the law of attraction. I think it's just that when you want to do something, you set in motion certain things that make it happen. My problem is that I just changed my mind too often.

That's what I've learned about dreams: if you've got one, and you just start doing things that align with that, you're gonna get your dream. If you want it, you'll get there.

Maybe not if you want something ridiculous. I don't know, this could backfire. Like if you want to be the first person to colonize Mars, that maybe won't happen.

XOXO,
XOXO,
XOXO, Mouths
XOXO, Mouths
XOXO, Mouths
Mouths
Mouths